



Economic & International Development Department

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

1st FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY 1 BUILDING, 300 N. CAMPBELL STREET

MAY 18, 2015, 4:00 P.M.

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in the First Floor Council Chambers, City 1 Building, 300 N. Campbell Street, May 18, 2015, 4:00 p.m.

The following commissioners were present:

Commissioner Beatriz Lucero

Commissioner Randy Brock

Vice-Chairman Edgar Lopez

Chairman William Helm

Commissioner Melinda Becker Skillern

The following commissioners were not present:

Commissioner Cesar Gomez

Commissioner George Cordova

The following City staff members were present:

Ms. Providencia Velázquez, Historic Preservation Officer, Economic Development

Ms. Kristen Hamilton-Karam, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m., quorum present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None.

I. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

INTRODUCTION

At this time, Ms. Velázquez welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Melinda Skillern.

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II. REGULAR AGENDA – DISCUSSION AND ACTION**Certificate of Appropriateness**

1. **PHAP15-00012:** Being 32 Sunset Heights 1 To 30, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 220 Lawton Drive (Vilas Elementary School)
- Historic District: Sunset Heights
- Property Owner: El Paso Independent School District
- Representative: Nicholas Corona
- Representative District: 8
- Existing Zoning: R-4/H (Residential/Historic)
- Year Built: 1940
- Historic Status: Landmark
- Request: Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of an existing asphalt parking lot and curb, playground, and structure and construction of a new parking lot with chain link fencing, striping, paving, ramps, sidewalks, gates, rock wall, irrigation, driveway, signage, angled parking, and landscaping
- Application Filed: 5/4/15
- 45 Day Expiration: 6/18/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of an existing asphalt parking lot and curb, playground, and structure and construction of a new parking lot with chain link fencing, striping, paving, ramps, sidewalks, gates, rock wall, irrigation, driveway, signage, angled parking, and landscaping.

Ms. Velázquez explained Vilas Elementary School would undergo a transformation to accommodate students from Mesita Elementary School and the surrounding area. Vilas Elementary is a neighborhood school, within walking distance for most students; however, the project was designed to accommodate the needs of those students who must travel to get to school.

PARKING LOT, ANGLED PARKING ON MUNDY DRIVE

Per the presentation photos, Ms. Velázquez explained the intent of the project is to provide additional parking to accommodate those students not residing in the neighborhood. The existing parking lot will be demolished to provide a safe drop-off site with one-way entrance and exit sites. Access to the drop-off site will be via the existing alleyway. In all, one new handicapped parking and approximately 29 new angled parking spaces on Mundy Drive will be added.



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LANDSCAPE

The landscape plan proposes 12 new trees and, if necessary, the removal of old, dead trees to be replaced in-kind. Ms. Velázquez read the following into the record:

The Historic Preservation Office recommends **APPROVAL WITH A MODIFICATION*** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:

- *Construction of new fences, stairs, or sidewalk rails and replacement of older existing fences is allowed on historic properties provided that the proposed site feature is of a compatible material and scale. Rock, brick, wood and wrought iron are acceptable materials but each case is decided individually. Cinder block and chain link fencing are relatively recent developments and are therefore not appropriate fencing materials.*
- *Introduce new fences and walls compatible in material, design, scale, location, and size with original fences and walls in the historic district.*
- *The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure and should not obstruct the public's view of the building. Any proposed fence higher than 6 ft., between buildings on an interior property line or across the rear property line, shall be reviewed by the HLC.*
- *All new construction (including detached infill and additions to existing structures) should preserve and enhance the streetscape by appropriately addressing the elements of the historic streetscape. This does not mean that the new structure should appear historic but it should appear aesthetically and architecturally compatible and reinforce the historic properties of the adjacent buildings.*
- *New and replacement portions of sidewalks and driveways shall be constructed in material, finish, color, scoring, grid pattern, and control joints to match existing or the surrounding original paving.*
- *Construct new driveways and walkways in locations that require a minimum of alteration to historic site features such as landscaping, retaining walls, curbs, and sidewalks.*
- *When repair or replacement is required the existing structure (garage or driveway) should be replaced in kind.*
- *New parking areas should be designed to have a minimal effect on the neighborhood environment.*
- *Retain mature trees that contribute to the character of the historic district.*
- *When replacing trees that are causing structural problems carefully consider the new location so that the tree will be able to mature in a healthy manner.*
- *Maintain the property's natural topography, and avoid grading that adversely affects drainage and soil stability or could negatively impact existing trees.*
- *Replace mature trees with similar canopy and in the same location when they are damaged or diseased. When the same site location is not practical, select a location for replacement trees that will enhance the appearance and character of the historic streetscape or provide shade.*
- *Where additional parking is necessary it should be located to the rear of the property as well.*
- *Introduce new signage that is compatible in material, size, color, scale, and character with the building or the district.*
- *Introduce fire exists, stairs, landings, and ramps on rear or inconspicuous side locations.*

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- Construct fire exists, stairs, landings and ramps in such a manner that they do not damage historic materials and features. Construct them so that they can be removed in the future with minimal damage to the historic structure.
- Features added to assist person with disabilities should be designed and constructed so that the original design of the entrance or porch is not diminished and historic materials or features are not damaged.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
- Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

***THE MODIFICATION IS THAT THE CHAIN LINK FENCING AT THE PERIMETER OF THE PROPERTY BE REPLACED WITH A MORE COMPATIBLE MATERIAL SUCH AS METAL PICKET.**

SUNSET HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (SHNIA)

Ms. Velázquez read into the record the email response from Ms. Leah Wood, President, SHNIA, regarding the proposed project:

"This is to serve as notification that SHNIA (Sunset Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association) has spoken with Adrian (Stresow, Director Planning Engineering & Construction, EPISD) regarding the requests for Vilas Elementary School. We are in support of the modifications being requested. The neighbors have stated that grass or artificial turf would be fine as it is our understanding that it cannot be seen from the street level. We would support a metal picket fence over chain link as chain link is not within our historic district guidelines. SHNIA is currently working with Mrs. Ferris, principal, and Carlos Gallinar Deputy Director, Planning & Inspections Department) in regards to the parking and drop areas that are being proposed. We are in support of redesigning the areas to help with the traffic flow and minimize the impact to the area around Vilas. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions."



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CHAIN LINK FENCING

Ms. Velázquez stated chain link fencing is proposed.

For clarification, Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez to repeat the modification.

Via the presentation photos of properties within the historic district that have metal picket fences, Ms. Velázquez stated *the modification is that the perimeter chain link fence be replaced with metal picket*. Additionally, via the site plans, Ms. Velázquez pointed out the suggested location for the metal picket fence.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified the existing chain link fence will be replaced with *new chain link fencing*, no change in look or aesthetics. He wondered what type of fencing currently exists at the school.

Ms. Velázquez explained she had suggested the modification for the metal picket fencing as per the guidelines. Via the presentation site plans, Ms. Velázquez highlighted the area of the new fencing.

Chairman Helm asked if there were any members of the public who wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to the request. *There were none*.

Using the presentation site plans, Mr. Adrian Stresow, EPISD, Director Planning Engineering & Construction, stated the installation of the *new chain link fencing* would be along Fewel Street.

Vice-Chairman Lopez verified the *new chain link fencing* would match the existing in height and look.

Mr. Stresow replied yes, standard six-foot chain link fence.

DRIVEWAY

Mr. Stresow stated the existing driveway would be widened and new curb cuts would be included.

ANGLED PARKING, PRESERVATION OF EXISTING AND PLANTING NEW TREES

Vice-Chairman Lopez confirmed the project proposed new angled parking on Mundy Street and existing trees would remain.

Mr. Stresow responded the proposed project shows new trees will be included. Currently, drivers parallel park on Mundy Drive; however, it was decided that angled parking would be the best solution for the increase in traffic. Vilas Elementary School has become a pre-kindergarten through first grade institution.

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Mr. Robert Gonzales, Quantum Engineering Consultants Incorporated, Principal/Project Manager/Chief Design Engineer and Quality Control/Quality Assurance Manager for all projects, stated there shall be 29 new parking spaces with approximately 16 salvaged trees. The parkway will be adjusted to accommodate the angled parking. Mr. Gonzales discussed the proposed project with City of El Paso, Department of Transportation staff. Transportation Department staff is in agreement with the proposed project plans. As required, additional trees will be planted.

Vice-Chairman Lopez wondered if the bulb-outs or calming devices, to be located on the street corners, were part of this project. He explained the calming devices provide additional safety barriers for students walking to school.

Mr. Gonzales replied yes, they are. In fact, in the middle of the block, we will be adding the bulb outs to shorten the distance for those students and parents walking to the school. Notably, these were raised in the crosswalks.

With regard to the new parking, Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Mr. Gonzales if trees would be planted in the middle for a Greek island effect.

Mr. Gonzales explained the reason for the islands was to save the trees.

Chairman Helm commented on salvaging the trees.

Mr. Gonzales replied yes, 16 trees would be salvaged.

MOTION:

Motion made by Vice-Chairman Lopez, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE WITH NO MODIFICATION ACCORDING TO PLAN, TO KEEP THE CHAIN LINK FENCE ALONG FEWEL STREET WITH ADDITIONAL TREES ON THE PARKING, AS SUBMITTED.



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2. PHAP15-00013:	Being 32 Sunset Heights 1 To 30, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
Location:	220 Lawton Drive (Vilas Elementary School)
Historic District:	Sunset Heights
Property Owner:	El Paso Independent School District
Representative:	CEA Group
Representative District:	8
Existing Zoning:	R-4/H (Residential/Historic)
Year Built:	1940
Historic Status:	Landmark
Request:	Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the existing asphalt playground area and replacement with landscaping, hardscaping, concrete, chain link fencing, sidewalks, artificial turf, and a safety surface for playground equipment
Application Filed:	5/4/15
45 Day Expiration:	6/18/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the existing asphalt playground area and replacement with landscaping, hardscaping, concrete, chain link fencing, sidewalks, artificial turf, and a safety surface for playground equipment. This portion of this project will take place adjacent to the parking area. There will be no impact on the original structure and very little to the surrounding area as the entire project will take place within the school grounds.

PLAYGROUND AREA

Ms. Velázquez explained the playground area is bound by Mundy Drive and Fewel Street, completely exposed and all hardscape. The proposal is to remove the hardscaping and install a very large play area with artificial turf, trees and landscape.

Ms. Velázquez read the following recommendations into the record:

The Historic Preservation Office recommends **APPROVAL WITH A MODIFICATION*** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:

- Construction of new fences, stairs, or sidewalk rails and replacement of older existing fences is allowed on historic properties provided that the proposed site feature is of a compatible material and scale. Rock, brick, wood and wrought iron are acceptable materials but each case is decided individually. Cinder block and chain link fencing are relatively recent developments and are therefore not appropriate fencing materials.*
- The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure (primarily as viewed from the street) and should not obstruct the public's view of the building.*



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- Solid walls are appropriate for the side property lines while an open fencing material is more appropriate for the front portion of the property.
- Introduce new fences and walls compatible in material, design, scale, location, and size with original fences and walls in the historic district.
- The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure and should not obstruct the public's view of the building. Any proposed fence higher than 6 ft., between buildings on an interior property line or across the rear property line, shall be reviewed by the HLC.
- New and replacement portions of sidewalks and driveways shall be constructed in material, finish, color, scoring, grid pattern, and control joints to match existing or the surrounding original paving.
- In certain cases where issues such as water conservation and maintenance are applicable, some types of hard surface coverings for 100% coverage may be considered on an individual basis by the Historic Landmark Commission. These include materials such as Franklin Mountain stone, landscaping, rock, brick and pavers that might be appropriate to the area.
- Landscaping is an inherent part of a building's siting and design. Good landscaping reinforces the architectural qualities of a structure and its context. When new landscaping is planning, it should be designed to complement the structure and the streetscape. Materials which can be documented as being historic to the area should be given first priority.
- Retain mature trees that contribute to the character of the historic district.
- Retain mature trees that contribute to the character of the historic district.
- Maintain the property's natural topography, and avoid grading that adversely affects drainage and soil stability or could negatively impact existing trees.
- Retain historic landscape materials such as brick or pavers.
- Replace mature trees with similar canopy and in the same location when they are damaged or diseased. When the same site location is not practical, select a location for replacement trees that will enhance the appearance and character of the historic streetscape or provide shade.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

***THE MODIFICATION IS THAT THE ARTIFICIAL TURF BE REPLACED WITH REAL GRASS.**

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SUNSET HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (SHNIA)

Ms. Velázquez read into the record email response from Ms. Leah Wood, President, SHNIA, regarding the proposed project:

"This is to serve as notification that SHNIA (Sunset Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association) has spoken with Adrian (Stresow, Director Planning Engineering & Construction, EPISD) regarding the requests for Vilas Elementary School. We are in support of the modifications being requested. The neighbors have stated that grass or artificial turf would be fine as it is our understanding that it cannot be seen from the street level. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions."

ARTIFICIAL TURF

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez if artificial turf was located elsewhere in the district.

Ms. Velázquez responded yes, one other property does have artificial turf. Several years ago, a property owner residing in the Manhattan Heights Historic District had landscaping she could not maintain and would have like to have had artificial turf; however, she decided the artificial turf was cost prohibitive.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified the playground is located on the corner of Mundy Drive and Fewel Street.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez to explain her concern regarding the artificial turf.

Ms. Velázquez stated she did wonder if artificial turf was an appropriate material in the district; additionally, she was concerned that approving the artificial turf would set a precedent within the historic district. Furthermore, it was her understanding artificial turf retains heat.

Vice-Chairman Lopez agreed with Ms. Velázquez's concerns; however, for schools, artificial turf would be an improvement.

Per the site plan, as shown in the presentation, Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez to highlight the area that would be artificial turf.

LANDSCAPING PLAN/RETAINING WALLS/ARTIFICIAL TURF

Via the landscaping plan, Ms. Velázquez noted the additional trees and added shade would make an inviting play area for the children.

Currently, Vice-Chairman Lopez stated there is currently no landscaping; the playground area is all hardscape.

Ms. Velázquez agreed that the area is all concrete.



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Vice-Chairman Lopez asked how tall the existing retaining walls were.

Ms. Velázquez replied she guessed the retaining walls were eight to ten feet in height.

Mr. Adrian Stresow, EPISD, Director Planning Engineering & Construction, clarified the retaining walls were eight to 12 feet high.

Chairman Helm asked which street was the retaining wall high side located.

Ms. Velázquez responded Fewel Street.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked if changes to the chain link fencing were proposed.

Ms. Velázquez replied no changes to the chain link fencing or retaining walls are proposed.

Mr. Stresow explained the reason for the artificial turf, in terms of the structural stability of the retaining walls, was that whole back area was homes with small yards. If we were to take that entire area and surcharge it with water and turf, we are not sure the retaining wall would survive. With the number of children, 400 to 500, a natural turf field would not survive. EPISD installed an artificial turf field and additional trees at Lamar Elementary School; Mr. Stresow has not received any complaints concerning the artificial turf and heat. The staff and children at Lamar Elementary seem to enjoy the artificial turf.

Additionally, per the site plan, Mr. Stresow explained the larger circle crossing the landscaping on the south side, in the back area on Fewel Street, will become sand areas with sand tables for the children to play in.

Chairman Helm asked Mr. Stresow how long the artificial turf field at Lamar Elementary School has been in place.

Mr. Stresow estimated the artificial turf field at Lamar Elementary has been in place for four to five years.

Commissioner Lucero asked Mr. Stresow how is the artificial turf field cared for.

Mr. Stresow replied the techniques are Bruning and Geomax Testing. He noted that recently EPISD tested the high school artificial turf fields and it was found that three needed to have rubber pellets added, the other fields were fine.



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Chairman Helm asked what the product life span was.

Mr. Stresow replied 10 to 12 years; however, that depends on the maintenance and the wear and tear.

Chairman Helm asked if the project designer would walk commissioners and staff through the plan.

Per the site plan, Mr. Jorge Azcarate, P.E., CEA Group, project designer, explained the area in the middle will be the artificial turf field with a striped sidewalk/track around the perimeter to encourage children to learn right/left sides while walking/running. Additionally, 24 trees and 40 shrubs will be planted around the artificial turf to create a buffer and to screen the playground area from the residential areas. The trees are 2" caliber, 10 feet in height; the shrubs are five gallon; 18 inches minimum height.

PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked if there would be any parkway improvements between the sidewalk and the street.

Mr. Azcarate noted the parkway improvements were included in the previous project. However, those trees and the trees included in this project provide more screening between the street and the project.

Vice-Chairman Lopez added the trees will be a big improvement to the playground area.

Chairman Helm asked Mr. Azcarate to highlight the mulched areas.

Per the site plan, Mr. Azcarate pointed to the two designated areas that the principal requested in order to teach the children how plants and things grow, a school garden. He also pointed out the small boulder, rock climbing locations; the subarea between Fewel Street and the sidewalk will be mulch, peat grout and desert tan screening material. Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Mr. Azcarate what would be occurring on the north side of the playground area.

Mr. Azcarate explained there are two concrete surface areas to allow the children to be creative using chalk.

Chairman Helm liked the effect of less heat on there.

Vice-Chairman Lopez thanked the project designers for their big improvement on the property, especially the perimeter trees creating a buffer between the school and the residential areas.

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MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Vice-Chairman Lopez AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL WITHOUT THE MODIFICATION SO THAT WE GO AHEAD AND KEEP THE ARTIFICIAL TURF.

3. Addresses of property HLC commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. May 4, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the May 18, 2015 meeting. May 18, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be schedule for the June 1, 2015 meeting.

Ms. Velázquez noted Commissioner Gomez had emailed her a request to review; she forwarded that request to Code Enforcement staff to investigate.

HLC Staff Report

4. Update on Administrative Review cases since the last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

Ms. Velázquez explained the list was somewhat long because there was not an HLC meeting May 4th; however, nothing was out of the ordinary.

Chairman Helm commented on **PHHR-00056-4700 Cumberland Circle, Manuel Caballero (owner)** – Non-Contributing Property – A request was made to repair existing barrel tile clay roof and replace barrel tile as needed to match existing (use clay barrel tile roofing).

Ms. Velázquez responded yes, the owner will replace barrel tile with barrel tile.

Chairman Helm asked if a Certificate of Appropriateness was necessary for solar panels.

Ms. Velázquez explained no, not if the solar panels are not visible. The guidelines address solar panels under *Mechanical Equipment* so if the solar panels are behind ...

Chairman Helm stated if they're behind the parapet and not visible from the street.

Ms. Velázquez added yes, exactly. For this case, the owner already had the solar panels on an existing house; however, he wanted them on the garage directly behind the house.

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MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Chairman Helm AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE HLC STAFF REPORT.

Other Business – Discussion and Action

5. Discussion on Downtown survey and map (per 11.24.2014 meeting discussion) including discussion of Certified Local Government (CLG) grant.

Ms. Velázquez invited commissioners to attend the city council meeting on May 26th as the grant proposal is being presented to the City Council for approval.

Chairman Helm commented on a possible quorum.

Ms. Hamilton-Karam explained staff would post the item accordingly, to allow discussion amongst commissioners and/or to comment on the agenda item before the representatives, in the event a quorum of commissioners is present. She suggested commissioners speak to their appointed representatives regarding the proposed grant.

Ms. Velázquez explained the City of El Paso was awarded a grant by the Texas Historical Commission, the State of Texas Historical Preservation Office, to conduct a survey of the downtown and the Segundo Barrio areas and to create a *National Register* nomination. This will allow the property owners to take advantage of the tax credits, both state and federal, when renovating their properties. When property owners combine both state and federal tax credits, property owners are looking at a 45% rebate in renovating costs. The state and federal tax credits are excellent preservation tools when restoring historic properties. The grant award was above and beyond the original asking note of \$50,000.00; however, the Texas Historical Commission awarded \$56,000.00 as they feel this project needs to be completed and done. Due to the amount awarded, the proposal must be presented to City Council.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez if the scope of the survey remains the same as previously discussed.

Ms. Velázquez replied yes, it does.

Chairman Helm continued and the primary goal is to reassess the boundaries of the overlay.

Ms. Velázquez replied yes and to actually look at extending, not so much the Downtown Historic District, but actually looking at a much larger district to include the Segundo Barrio.

Chairman Helm continued, for extended boundaries of that district.

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Ms. Velázquez stated:

1. We are reassessing the Downtown Historic District because we have lost numerous properties, many of which were considered non-contributing when individuals felt those properties were contributing.
2. This is an effort to get the Downtown Historic District listed on *The National Register* so that property owners may take advantage of the tax credits.
3. We will also be looking at the Greater Downtown, to include the Segundo Barrio, and assess that area and possibly nominate the area to be listed on *The National Register* so they can also take advantage of the tax credits.

Chairman Helm asked how long it *The National Register* process would take.

Ms. Velázquez explained it depends on the number of structures considered and we are considering at least 1,000 structures. The deadline for the survey is September 2016. Ultimately, *The National Register* nomination depends on the property owners; we need a majority of the property owners to agree. It also depends on the State Historic Preservation Office because they will review the application form and determine if the City of El Paso has the beginnings of a great historic district or not. If yes, then the application will be forwarded to The National Park Service for their review.

Chairman Helm understood the National Park Service designation was not necessary for the tax credits; the local district would cover that.

Ms. Velázquez responded for the property to receive the state and national credits it has to be *National Register* eligible. Property owners may renovate their structure(s) then submit their request to be listed in *The National Register*. For federal tax credits, yes, you do need the *The National Register* nomination; they're actually very similar.

Chairman Helm asked if the property is currently located within a nationally registered historic district, that property automatically has that or does the property need that special designation.

Ms. Velázquez explained the property must be a contributing, commercial property within a nationally registered district; for example, qualifying properties would be an apartment building or a house that is rented out.

Chairman Helm clarified the existing, local Downtown Historic District, in and of itself, does not require that.



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Ms. Velázquez responded no, not exactly; although many of the buildings within the Downtown Historic District also are listed on *The National Register*.

Chairman Helm clarified those building already have what they need.

Ms. Velázquez replied yes.

Chairman Helm requested commissioners be present for the City Council meeting next Tuesday, May 26th to discuss the proposed grant.

6. Preservation Month 2015 – <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/economic-development/historic-preservation>

Ms. Velázquez explained May is “Historic Preservation Month” and this year we are focusing on the Manhattan Heights Historic District.

To honor Historic Preservation Month the following activities were/are scheduled:

1. Previously, a ceremony unveiling the marker honoring Mabel Welch, El Pasoan, and the second registered female architect in all of Texas. Much of Ms. Welch’s work is within the Manhattan Heights Historic District. The story goes that on her deathbed, Ms. Welch requested her only son gather up all her drawings and papers, take them to McKelligon Canyon and burn them, which he did. Ms. Welch was quite the prolific architect; she worked on at least 1,500 properties throughout the Southwest and Mexico.
2. Additionally, a small tour of Ms. Welch’s work in the Manhattan Heights Historic District was made available.
3. Dr. Max Grossman will head a walking tour of the Downtown Historic District on Saturday, May 30th. The tour is sponsored by the Texas Trost Society and costs \$15.00. Ms. Velázquez strongly recommended commissioners participate in this tour because they will learn so much about this historic district. RSVP to www.texastrost.org.

Chairman Helm asked if any other events were scheduled to honor “Historic Preservation Month.”

Ms. Velázquez responded yes, this past week the “Eco El Paso” conference was held. At this conference the Texas Historical Commission presented a discussion regarding the new tax credits. Ms. Velázquez added the new tax credits look very, very promising.

Chairman Helm wondered if the non-profits were included.

Ms. Velázquez thought the non-profits were included. She was not aware of any eliminations from the eligibility of the credits.

Chairman Helm commented on legislation in the Texas State House.



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7. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for April 20, 2015

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez if 9816 Socorro Road would be posted on a future HLC agenda.

Ms. Velázquez explained commissioners never reviewed this request as the representative submitted a change in the project that Monday morning and there was not sufficient time to repost the agenda; therefore, the item was deleted from the agenda. To comply with the Open Meetings Act, agenda must be posted 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Ms. Velázquez had heard from the architect of the project that he is revising the application.

MOTION:

Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Lucero AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED.

MOTION:

Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Lucero AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:57 P.M.

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